

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-14

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R 180543Z MAY 74

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9044

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 3969

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, LA, TH

SUBJECT: THAI/LAO RELATIONS

1. WE HAVE REPORTED THE DECISION OF THE LAO COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TO ASK THE FRENCH AND NORTH VIETNAMESE GOVERNMENTS TO CONSIDER THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RAILROAD PARALLEL TO ROUTE 8 FROM THE THAKHEK AREA TO VINH. THIS DECISION IS INDICATIVE OF THE STRONG DESIRE OF BOTH THE PATHET LAO AND THE QTE VIENTIANE SIDE UNQTE TO BREAK WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE THE STRANGLE HOLD OF THE THAI ON COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC INTO LAOS.

2. THE VEHEMENCE WITH WHICH THE LAO LEADERSHIP NOW DENOUNCES THE THAIS IS VERY NOTICEABLE. FINANCE MINISTER NGON SANANIKONE EXPRESSED THE VIEW TO THE AMBASSADOR LAST WEEK THAT THE PA MONG HYDRO-ELECTRIC PROJECT WOULD NEVER BE APPROVED BY THE LAO AS ITS BENEFIT TO THAILAND HAD TO BE CONTRASTED WITH THE MANY YEARS OF THAI SKULLDUGGERY TO WHICH THE LAO HAD BEEN SUBJECTED.

3. PRIME MINISTER SOUVANNA PHOUMA HELD FORTH YESTERDAY AT GREAT LENGTH ON THE THEME OF THAI CORRUPTION TO A GROUP OF AMBASSADORS AND SENIOR OFFICIALS. HE HAD JUST RECEIVED THREE TRUNKS OF PERSONAL EFFECTS FROM
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PARIS

AND THE THAI HAD BROKEN THE LOCKS AND RUMMAGED
THROUGH HIS POSSESSIONS. THE FOREGOING TOOK PLACE
AT A CEREMONY AT WHICH A JAPANESE GIFT OF SUPPLIES
FOR REFUGEES WAS ACCEPTED. THE PRIME MINISTER ALLEGED
THAT THESE SUPPLIES HAD BEEN KEPT IN BANGKOK FOR MONTHS.

4. WHETHER THE FOREGOING IS TRUE OR NOT, THE PRESENT
STATE OF MIND HERE ABOUT THAILAND IS MOST
UNFORTUNATE. WE HOPE THAT THE REPLACEMENT FOR THAI
AMBASSADOR NINNAD WILL BE ENERGETIC AND CAPABLE AND
WILL HAVE ENOUGH CLOUT IN BANGKOK TO GET ACTION ON SOME
OF THE PROBLEMS THE LAO FIND PARTICULARLY GALLING.
WHITEHOUSE

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